

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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NOFORN

FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO BELGRADE BERLIN BONN
BUCHAREST BUDAPEST DIA WASHDC GENEVA SALT TWO GENEVA NATO
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FROM MOSCOW 28 DEC 73:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 16145

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, MARR, FR, GW, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET FEARS OF A WEST EUROPEAN DEFENSE
ARRANGEMENT

NOFORN

VIENNA FOR USDEL MBFR

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

1. SUMMARY. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SOVIET FEARS
OF A WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT -- A PROMINENT
RECENT FEATURE OF THE SOVIET PRESS -- ARE GENUINE. IN
OUR VIEW THEY ARE BASED ON TRADITIONAL APPREHENSIONS
ABOUT A UNIFIED WESTERN EUROPE, A NEWER APPREHENSION
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THAT SUCH A EUROPE WOULD BE ARMED WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS,
A FEAR OF THE POWERFUL ROLE THE FRG MIGHT PLAY IN
EUROPEAN DEFENSE, AND AN OVERALL DISTASTE AT HAVING TO
COPE WITH A LESS RELIABLE AND LESS STABLE ADVERSARY

THAN A U.S.-DOMINATED NATO. SOVIET OPPOSITION TO EU OPEAN DEFENSE CUTS ACROSS TWO OTHER IMPORTANT SOVIET POLICIES. IT HAS ALREADY CAUSED SOME RETHINKING OF THE SOVIET POLICY OF ENCOURAGING UNILATERAL U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWALS FR M EUROPE -- WHICH MAY MEAN SOME POSITIVE FALLOUT AT THE MBFR TALKS. AND IT IS CAUSING PROBLEMS FOR MOSCOW'S TRADITIONAL EFFORTS TO DIVIDE THE U.S. FROM ITS ALIES -- WHICH MAY BRING SOME MODERATION IN SOVIET EXPLOITATION OF THE CONDOMINIUM THEME AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE OIL WEAPON. SINCE SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT EUROPEAN DEFENSE CAN HAVE A USEFUL EFFECT ON UNCONSTRUCTIVE SOVIET POLICIES, THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT THE U.S. DO NOTHING TO ALLAY THAT CONCERN. END SUMMARY.

2. AS WEST EUROPEAN INTEREST IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION HAS GROWN, SO HAS SOVIET CONCERN. WE BELIEVE THE CONCERN IS REAL AND IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPAL FACTORS:

A. MOSCOW HAS BEEN CONSISTENT IN ITS OPPOSITION TO A UNIFIED WESTERN EUROPE. IT IS LEARNING TO LIVE WITH THE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF WE, BUT POLITICAL INTEGRATION MAKES IT NERVOUS AND MILITARY INTEGRATION TROUBLES IT EVEN MORE. THE MILITARY FEAR IS A LONGSTANDING ONE, GOING BACK (AS YURI ZHUKOV POINTED OUT IN PRAVDA DECEMBER 25) TO THE EDC DEBATE OF 1954 AND EVEN TO THE LOCARNO AGREEMENT OF 1925. MOREOVER, CHINESE ENCOURAGEMENT OF WEST EUROPEAN DEFENSE CAPABILITIES PROBABLY DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO SOVIET PEACE OF MIND.

B. ADDING SPECIAL POINT TO THE TRADITIONAL SOVIET FEAR OF A MILITARILY UNITED WE IS THE PROSPECT THAT TODAY SUCH A GROUPING COULD DISPOSE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. VIRTUALLY EVERY RECENT SOVIET COMMENTARY ON WE DEFENSE HAS RAISED THIS THREAT.

C. THERE IS ALSO A STRONG SOVIET FEAR THAT CREATION
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OF A WE DEFENSE STRUCTURE WOULD INCREASE BOTH THE POWER AND THE NEGATIVE POTENTIAL OF WEST GERMANY. ASPECTS OF THIS OBSESSION INCLUDE THE SPECTRES OF AN FRG REASSERTING ITS POLITICAL DOMINANCE IN WE, SLIPPING THE NUCLEAR RESTRICTION VIA A DEFENSE UNION, TURNING AGAIN TO A SERIOUS POLICY OF REUNIFICATION, AND THREATENING THE EAST ONCE MORE.

D. FINALLY, THERE IS PROBABLY A SOVIET DISTASTE FOR THE UNCERTAINTIES OF HAVING TO DEAL WITH A RESURGENT WE. A STRICTLY EUROPEAN ADVERSARY WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE LESS POWERFUL THAN A U.S.-DOMINATED NOAT; BUT IT WOULD ALSO BE LESS STABLE AND LESS RELIABLE IN

SOVIET EYES. MOREOVER, MOSCOW MAY BE PERSUADED BY THE ARGUMENT USED BY SOME PROPONENTS OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE FORCE: THAT IN A CRUNCH, THE U.S. WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO RISK NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION FOR THE SAKE OF EUROPE. AT LEAST THE SOVIETS HAVE COME TO KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A QUARTER-CENTURY OF NATO, AND THEY PREFER THE DEVIL THAT THEY KNOW.

3. SOVIET MEDIA TREATMENT OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE IDEAS HAS BEEN UNIFORMLY HOSTILE AND QUITE INDISCRIMINATE. NO IMPORTANT DISTINCTION IS MADE BETWEEN A EUROGROUP FOCUS OR A WEU FOCUS -- THEY'RE BOTH BAD, AS A NEWTIMES COMMENTARY (NO. 49) POINTED OUT. MOREOVER, IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT MUCH OF THE CURRENT SOVIET IRRITATION WITH FRANCE HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE DEFENSE ISSUE, ALTHOUGH SOVIET COMMENTATORS STOP JUST SHORT OF SAYING SO. THE FIRST INDIRECT CRITICISM OF FRANCE IN THE CURRENT SERIES (LITERARY GAZETTE NOVEMBER 28) WAS BASED ON DEFENSE, AND JOBERT'S VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT HAVE BEEN REPORTED FULLY AND ARCHLY. IN CONTRAST, THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT'S SINKING OF EDC IN 1954 AND DE GAULLE'S VIEWS ON EUROPEAN UNION ARE RECALLED F *DLY BY *OVIET COMMENTATORS.

4. DESPITE PRESS ATTENTION TO EUROPEAN DEFENSE, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL SOVIET D*MARCHE TO WE COUNTRIES AS FAR AS WE KNOW. PERHAPS SOVIETS ARE WORRIED THAT A PROTEST WOULD POUR FUEL RATHER THAN CONFIDENTIAL

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WATER ON THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE COALS. PERHAPS THEY ARE HOPING THAT -- TO THE EXTENT THE IDEA HAS SPRUNG FROM THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS -- IT WILL DIE DOWN WITH THE CRISIS ITSELF. OR PERHAPS THEY ARE WAITING TO TAKE THE MATTER UP NEXT YEAR WHEN BRANDT, POMPIDOU, AND HEATH COME TO MOSCOW.

5. SOVIET OPPOSITION TO A EUROPEAN DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT IS IN MANY RESPECTS INCONSISTENT WITH TWO IMPORTANT AND TRADITIONAL SOVIET POLICIES -- TO GET U.S. TROOPS OUT OF EUROPE AND TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES. IN SOME AREAS -- PARTICULARLY MBFR -- SOVIET POLICY SHOWS SIGNS OF RECOGNIZING THE DILEMMA AND ADJUSTING TO IT. IN OTHER AREAS, MOSCOW SEEMS TO BE ENGAGED IN AN UNEASY JUGGLING OF INCOMPATIBILITIES AND HOPING THAT NOTHING WILL FALL TO THE GROUND.

6. AS FAR BACK AS BREZHNEV'S SPEECH IN TBILISI IN MAY 1971 -- WHEN HE HELPED SCUTTLE THE FIRST MANSFIELD RESOLUTION BY GIVING A POSITIVE SIGNAL ON MBFR -- THERE WERE SIGNS THAT THE SOVIETS WERE RETHINKING THEIR

COLD WAR DOGMA THAT U.S. TROOPS SHOULD BE FORCED OUT OF EUROPE. WHILE THE SOVIETS GAVE THE IMPRESSION THEY WERE BEING DRAGGED RELUCTANTLY TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE AT VIENNA, THEY DID END UP THERE -- A FACT WHICH IN ITSELF HAS TAKEN SOME OF THE STEAM OUT OF CONGRESSIONAL EFFORTS TO LEGISLATE A RAPID AND UNILATERAL U.S. TROOP REDUCTION. THE SPECTRE OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE GROUPING SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A MAJOR FACTOR IN CONTRIBUTING TO THIS QUASI-REVISIONIST SOVIET BEHAVIOR. A WEEK AGO AN MFA OFFICIAL CONCEDED AS MUCH TO US -- HE SAID THAT THE U.S. AND THE USSR HAVE A SHARED INTEREST IN AVOIDING PRECIPITATE, UNILATERAL U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM EUROPE: THE U.S. BECAUSE OF THE SHOCK THIS WOULD CAUSE IN RELATIONS WITH WE, THE USSR BECAUSE OF THE IMPETUS IT WOULD GIVE THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE IDEA.

7. IF THIS SOVIET CONCERN IS AS REAL AS IT SEEMS TO BE, THEN MBFR OFFERS MOSCOW THE POSSIBILITY OF A U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL UNDER CONDITIONS THAT WOULD NOT GALVANIZE WE
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INTO A UNITED DEFENSE GROUPING. PERHAPS EQUALLY IMPORTANT, MBFR OFFERS THE SOVIETS THE HOPE OF WEST EUROPEAN (PARTICULARLY WEST GERMAN) REDUCTIONS, WHICH WOULD SET IN TRAIN A PROCESS THAT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE TO REVERSE. THIS CONSIDERATION MAY WELL BE AT THE HEART OF SOVIET INSISTENCE THAT WE FORCES BE INCLUDED IN THE FIRST STAGE OF REDUCTIONS.

8. THE SOVIETS HAVE RARELY HESITATED AT THE OPPORTUNITY TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ITS ALLIES. THE NUXON-BREZHNEV MEETINGS, FOSTERING FEARS OF A U.S.-SOVIET CONDOMINIUM OVER THE HEADS OF THE WESTERN EUROPEANS, GAVE THEM ONE SUCH OPPORTUNITY. THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, PARTICULARLY THE TENSIONS CULMINATING IN THE U.S. ALERT, GAVE THEM ANOTHER. THEY WERE QUICK TO EXPLOIT BOTH, IN THE FIRST CASE BY PUSHING THE CONDOMINIUM THEME (AS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THEIR EMPHASIS ON THE NUCLEAR WAR PREVENTION AGREEMENT) AND IN THE SECOND BY EXPLOITING THE ARAB OIL WEAPON AND WE DOUBTS ABOUT U.S. RELIABILITY TO EMPHASIZE DIVERGENT U.S.-WE INTERESTS. NOW -- SINCE THE CURRENT INTEREST IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE IS PARTLY THE RESULT OF U.S.-WE DISSENSIONS THE SOVIETS MUST BE BEGINNING TO WONDER ABOUT THE CONTINUING EFFICACY OF A POLICY OF DIVISION. IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE OF A PROBLEM FOR THEM IF U.S.-WE DISSENSION LED CONGRESS, OUT OF EXASPERATION WITH THE ALLIES, TO APPROVE A MANSFIELD-TYPE TROOP WITHDRAWAL.

9. THUS, THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE ISSUE ARGUES FOR A MODERATING OF THE SOVIET POLICY OF DIVIDING THE

U.S. FROM ITS ALLIES. AS LONG AS THE SOVIETS REGARD THE ISSUE AS A LIVE ONE, WE MAY SEE A SOVIET RELUCTANCE TO PLAY THE CONDOMINIUM THEME WITH THEIR ACCUSTOMED ABANDON, AS WELL AS A TENDENCY TO EASE UP ON ENCOURAGING USE OF THE OIL WEAPON. (OVERALL SOVIET INTEREST IN DETENTE WITH THE WEST SHOULD ALSO EXERT A MODERATING INFLUENCE ON OIL.)

10. OLD POLICIES DIE HARD, AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SOVIET FEARS OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE WILL SWEEP AWAY
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MOSCOW'S ENCRUSTED POLICIES OF SEEKING A WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES AND OF ENCOURAGING U.S.-WE DISCORD. ITS APPROACH TOWARD EUROPEAN DEFENSE MAY JOSTLE THOSE POLICIES INTO MORE MODERATE CHANNELS, BUT IT IS UNLIKELY TO DISPLACE THEM. A LIKELIER PROSPECT IS A SOVIET ATTEMPT TO STRADDLE POLICIES, REGARDLESS OF INCONSISTENCIES OR CONTRADICTIONS -- TO SEEK A DETERIORATION IN U.S.-WE POLITICAL AND MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS (LEADING TO EVENTUAL REMOVAL OF THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE FROM EUROPE), BUT A DETERIORATION FREE OF THE SHOCKS WHICH COULD CREATE A EUROPEAN MILITARY UNION.

11. THE MODERATING EFFECTS THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE ISSUE CAN HAVE ON SOVIET POLICY ARE CLEARLY IN THE U.S. INTEREST, AND COULD EVEN HAVE A SPECIFIC PAYOFF AT THE MBFR TALKS. IT IS THEREFORE IN OUR INTEREST THAT THE SPECTRE OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE CONTINUE TO DANCE BEFORE SOVIET EYES. WHATEVER OUR REAL FEELINGS ABOUT THE ISSUE, WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO LET THE SOVIETS THINK THAT WE QUESTION EUROPEAN SERIOUSNESS ON IT. PROBABLY THE BEST REACTION TO ANY SOVIET INQUIRIES OR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST ABOUT OUR VIEWS ON THE DEVELOPING EUROPEAN INTEREST IN A SEPARATE DEFENSE SYSTEM WOULD BE TO INDICATE U.S. EQUANIMITY AT THE PROSPECT. CERTAINLY WE SHOULD AVOID GIVING ANY IMPRESSION OF A SHARED U.S.-SOVIET INTEREST IN HEADING OFF SUCH A DEVELOPMENT, THOUGH WE SHOULD NOT DISCOURAGE MOSCOW FROM PURSUING MBFR TO THAT END. SOMMERLATTE UNQUOTE RUSH

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